the PLOUGH

TOWARDS AN IRISH WORKERS REPUBLIC | PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP | Vol. 2 No. 14

SMASH THE BRITISH AND LOYALIST TERROR MACHINE!

'UNITED WORKERS GROUP' SHOWS THE WAY

The murder of Hugh Coney is the clearest signal yet of the British strategy of a return to Stormont. In its efforts to leave Catholic areas powerless to resist the Loyalist takeover, the troops are stepping up repression to an all time high. Areas which have been relatively free from harrassment are now being saturated. Instead of picking on particular individuals the troops are how lifting everyone in sight. Mass arrests of over 70 people at a time are becoming a common occurrence. The murder of Coney is not an isolated incident – since then more people have been shot down in exactly the same fashion.

Meanwhile the mass arming of the Loyalists continues. The RUC are appearing more in Catholic areas, supported by heavier firepower than at any time during the last 5 years. Their methods are if anything more brutal than those of the Army. Dunmurray police barracks is using techniques of sensory deprivation and beatings to extract signed confessions of IRA membership. The Loyalist paramilitary groups are still pursuing their assassination campaign.

The British Army will only be withdrawn when all preparations for Stormont have been completed. The major one – the total terrorisation and demoralisation of the anti-unionist working class – is presenting them with increasing problems. The British Government is determined to make the hand over to Loyalism as peaceful as possible i.e. make sure that the anti-unionists are in position to resist; otherwise they fear large-scale confrontations which would lead to upheavals throughout Ireland.

However the anti-unionist working class refuses to lie down and be beaten. The consequences of the UWC strike are making themselves felt and there is increasing awareness that Stormong is coming back. and that resistance must be built. This process is being pushed along by the assassination campaign, the growing helplessness of the SDLP and the almost daily speculation in the media about what happens when troops do withdraw and protestant ascendancy is restored.

Inevitably this awareness is confused and lacks leadership. So far it has been centred entirely around internment. Four weeks ago the burning of Long Kesh brought about the largest demonstrations of anti-unionist militancy for over a year. The shooting of Hugh Coney produced similar results.

These spontaneous upheavals have dramatically cut through British complacency and have given the lie to Rees' remarks about a "handful of convicted prisoners". The seriousness with which the British Army treated them is shown by their massive retaliation including a de facto curfew of the Falls and Andersonstown area. The betrayals of the SDLP and 'Free' state government have been starkly illustrated by their total inability to intervene.

As the crisis deepens, more explosions of this nature can be expected. It is vital that a mass movement be built up to structure the frustrations of the anti-unionist minority and prepare for the defence of the ghettoes. In this connection the most significant feature has been the spontaneous emergence of the Belfast 'United Workers Group'. This group has organised the most militant demonstrations so far and have succeeded in holding rallies at the City Hall. As yet, is has not developed a clear political platform, but they do illustrate the deep felt need for unity of all anti-imperialist organisations and may well provide the basis for building a mass movement.

This movement must develop close links with the workers in the 26cos. in preparation for mass resistance to a return to Stormont on an all Ireland scale. All attempts at self-organisation NECESSITATE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE BRITISH ARMY. This demand must be pressed home since it pre-empts the present role of the troops and the type of withdrawal favoured by Britain. The demand must be for IMMEDIATE withdrawal; anything else – return to barracks or phased withdrawal – in no way prevents the British Army clearing the path for the Armed forces of Loyalism.

The fighting slogan of a mass movement built on demands for an end to internment and the withdrawal of troops, comprising all anti-imperialist groupings throughout Ireland must be NO RETURN TO STORMONT – BUILD SELF DEFENCE. This immediately draws a clear line between the Irish working class on the one hand and all shades of Unionism including the SDLP and the 'Free' State Government on the other ONLY THE WORKING CLASS CAN RESIST THE LOYALIST TAKEOVER.

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GOVERNMENT AND EMPLOYERS LAUNCH ATTACK AS ECONOMIC CRISIS DEEPENS

Irish Capitalism has been unwilling to alleviate the worsening effects of inflation and unemployment. The government pleads that these things are the result of an international-wide crisis, against which an Irish government is powerless. It is true that Ireland is feeling the effects of an international economic recession. But inflation and unemployment are not direct consequences of this recession. They are, more correctly, the direct result of the government's attempts to deal with it.

What the government is aiming at is to cut the spending power of the workers. This way, they hope to import less and export more. Then, profits they make by exporting, they will be able to keep. Instead of having to use them by distributing as wages to pay for imports. By following such a course, they will be able to keep up the profit margins during the present crisis.

Although the government only introduced this policy, at the beginning of the year, it is already beginning to show results. Prices are soaring up at an unprecedented rate, with unemployment nearing the 8% mark. As a result, the volume of demand i.e. the amount of commodities that workers are buying is also decreasing, for the first time in a few years. The current number of the Central Bank Report says that *"Retail sales in value terms rose by 12.1%, on a year to year basis but allowing for an increase in the Consumer Prices Index of 16.3% in the same period, the volume of retail sales has actually declined"*. So the governments' and employers' policy for the economic crisis amounts to this: **let inflation and unemployment undermine the buying power of the workers so that we can keep all profits made through exports.**

Workers are instinctively seeing through this scheme. Even the trade union leaders are beginning to feel the pressure. The November issue of *Liberty* (paper of the ITGWU) criticises the Labour Party for pursuing an insufficiently expansionist economic policy, within the National Coalition government. An unnoticed report in the Irish Times of October 16th states that a National Coalition cabinet meeting has already rejected this modest anti-flationary policy. So in the months ahead, growing conflict between the working class on the one hand and the employers and government on the other is predictable.

The government will more than likely try to get the leaders of the trade union off the hook by offering an "attractive" package deal. Glowing promises, guarantees for the future, as well as tax concessions and social-welfare increases that can be recovered by inflation, will be offered in return for restricting wages and accepting unemployment. Any collaboration along these lines must be firmly resisted by the working class. The government and employers must be made pay for their own crisis. If they cannot do that then they are a burden on society and should be disposed of. The only road open before the working class today, is the road to socialism!

INTRODUCTION...

Unemployment continues to rise. For the month of October the number of unemployed increased 10,757 on the same period last year. The overall unemployment now stands at 72,499. During this period the number of workers on short-time also increased dramatically from 41 to 2,975.

The primary areas hit by redundancies are, the textile industry which employs 48,000 workers, the construction industry which employs either directly or indirectly, 100,000 workers and the car industry which employs direct or indirectly 10,000 workers. Thus a major section of Irelands 300,000 industrial workers is immediately threatened by this wave of redundancies.

In the articles below the RMG analyses the nature of the crisis in each of these industries and suggests demands which can help the workers combat the employers and government. The crisis, taken as a whole, cannot be fought at plant or even industrial level alone. This crisis threatens ALL workers and it is necessary for workers to fight redundancies to combine broad demands which can win the support of all workers, with their own immediate and specific demands. That is why the call for nationalisation under workers control of those industries threatened with redundancy, tariff protection, state aid etc. figure so prominently in our list of demands.

It also follows from the general nature of the crisis that the fight against redundancy cannot be waged at plant level or even at industrial level alone. What is needed is a fight right across industry. For instance a national committee of workers who have fought militantly against closures in the textile, construction and car industry, could have a great effect in mobising the support of the whole working class for individual workers who are now or will be in the future, fighting for their jobs.

1. TEXTILE, CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IN DECLINE

The textile, clothing and footwear group of industries is one of the biggest sources of employment in the country. In fact 21% of all those engaged in manufacturing industry, work in this group. Accordingly, the fight against redundancy in this sector is very important for the whole working class. If the employers can get away with "rationalisation" in this area, not only will one of the greatest job providers be gone, but the way will be open for similar assaults on employment in other industries.

Reasons for crisis

In recent weeks up to 2,000 workers have either been laid-off or put on short time. The clothing and footwear industry have had the highest increase in the rate of unemployment in the last year. The overall rate of unemployment for the clothing and footwear industry is 8.7%, while in textiles 7.7 unemployed.

What has caused this crisis? There are a number of factors such as cheap labour, poor management, free trade, all of which are to blame.

Free trade is one of the more immediately obvious causes. Since the introduction of the Free Trade agreement with Britain in 1966 and more especially since entry into the EEC, this group of industries has experienced a tremendous challenge from foreign competitors. The following table constructed from data in the government publication give an adequate picture:

Industry Group:
Textiles
Competing Imports as % of home consumption:
1965: 26.9 1970: 33.8 1973: 45.8 1974: 47.1

Clothing & Footwear:
Competing Imports as % of home consumption:
1965: 8.3 1970: 18.3 . 1973: 28.9 1974: 31.4

In the textile industry, imports took away a further 20% of the Irish market from domestic producers between 1965 and 1974. In the same period, foreign competitors increased their shareof the market and gained an extra 23.1% for themselves.

The native capitalists in the industries are squealing to the government about their inability to compete with these foreign opponents. But why are they not able to compete? Here is where bad management and cheap labour comes in. The reason is because they have not invested enough capital to expand their plants and machinery. And one of the primary reasons for this is, that for years they have been supstituting cheap labour. For example the average hourly wage rate in the clothing industry in September 1973 was 48% below the average hourly rate in manufacturing as a whole.

The trade union movement itself bears a lot of the responsibility for th is sorry state of affairs. At the A.G.M. of Dublin No. 6 branch of the ITGWU Secretary Colbert Moore condemned the importation of textiles and clothing from such countries as South Korea, Hong Kong and Poland, where sweated labour is used to produce cheap commodities. In South Korea, he said young girls worked an 11 hour day, 7 day week for the equivalent of about £7 a month. This is all very true. But something that deserves more attack is the fact that the trade union rate for most jobs in the clothing industry is below what many employers are willing to pay! Because of this, lots of employers are able to keep their workers out of the unions. Over of workers are unionised compared with a national average of.
The result is an economically unviable industry that survives almost exclusively on cheap labour.

Workers fight back

But the textile, clothing and footwear workers are not giving up without a fight. In recent weeks they have been the most militant workers in the country. Workers in the Genesco owned Kire factory at Kinsale, have placed an embargo on £400,000 worth of stock as a bargaining weapon against any attempt to get rid of them quickly; in Limerick, Danus workers have occupied their factory and empounded £300,000 worth of goods; and in Waterford 393 workers in the Goodbody's factory put an embargo on the company's stocks.

With the experience and courage of these groups of workers the basis now exists for a national campaign to save the textile, clothing and footwear industries. The workers involved in these disputes could use their authority to help form a national committee to co-ordinate action on an all-Ireland basis. Such a committee could initiate a campaign.

(i) for the abolition of the Free Trade Agreement and withdrawal from the EEC. This campaign would meet with a wide response from workers in other industries who are threatened by the same factors.

(ii) for an end to the cheap labour policy. The adult national male average wage for manufacturing industry of £36.96p for a 44.6 hr. week should be demanded for all workers irrespective of sex, as an immediate step towards a minimum wage for a shorter working week.

(iii) for the maximum trade unionisation of the industry. This campaign could go out in conjunction with the fight for a better wage.

(iv) for subsidy and protection tariffs to help threatened factories to get back on their feet.

(v) for the nationalisation under workers control of all factories which are threatening to close. This demand is necessary in conjunction with the demand for subsidy and tariff protection. Why should these industries be put back into the incompetent hands of those who destroyed them in the first place?

2. BUILDING WORKERS FACE CRUNCH

There are two major factors behind the crisis in the construction industry. The first is the deflationary policy of the government. Deflation means limiting the supply of money to the consumers. This policy is being pursued by cutting wages and limiting the amount of credit available from financial institutions.

The latter aspect of this policy has serious consequences for the construction industry. Building firms have to keep large stocks of raw materials on hand especially since the serious supply problems encountered last year. McInerney Properties Ltd., for example, currently has £3m alone tied up in stocks of timber at its joinery plant at Cappencur. Also the sales of houses is a slow process and some companies are complaining that they have to wait up to five years before they get final payment.

Spiralling interest rates plus leaping inflation are all on the time eating away at money which is tied up like this. Last year the interest rates of Associated Banks, which supplies construction with nearly half of its credit, rose on six occasions. Inflation rose by 11.4% in 1973 and by all estimates will reach 22% before 1974 is out. The devestating effect this has can easily be seen in the recent performance of McInerney's Irelands second largest construction company. Last year this company made a profit of £794,000 while in the first half of this year it has lost £800,000!

Collpase of market

The second factor in the building crisis is the fall off in effective demand — although the great human need for housing still exists the homeless cannot afford to buy houses. Here the two aspects of deflation — wage restraint and the credit squeeze operate together.

The price of houses rose on average by 30% last year but wages, if they increased at all, came nowhere near such a figure. Consequently, fewer workers than ever can think of purchasing their own homes. Also, the Building Societies, financiers of the greater share of house purchasers, have become uncompetitive. Financial speculators prefer to invest with assurance companies where lucrative outlets are found for money that would otherwise have flowed into housing. The Building Societies say that the money available to the to loan out is down £8,000,000 on last year. The only alternative credit now available to house purchasers is short-term loans from the commercial banks. But with an interest rate of 15% on such loans this is not likely to help much.

As a result of these factors the sales and future construction of houses have collapsed. The Construction Industry Federation estimates that as many as 3,000 houses out of 17,000 built in the private sector last year remain unsold. And as far as future construction is concerned, a spokesman for Mc Inerneys last June estimated that housing starts were down 40% in the first half of this year on the same period last year. Around the same time the economic journal Business and Finance reported other builders as putting the decline in starts as high as 50%

Politics and authority

In addition to the two important factors listed above; the building crisis is intensified by another subsidiary factory.

There is a sharp power struggle going on between the National Coalition and Fianna Fail. It is well known that the construction industry as a whole and in particular the big three, McInerney, Gallagher Bros. and the Jones Group, provides a major source of support for Fianna Fail. Under the guise of "progressive social policy" the Labour Minister for Local Government Mr. Tully (who is also trying to channel house construction into the public authority housing which accounts for only 30% of total housing construction at the moment where there is greater control and less profits. Tully's obvious aim is to break the powerful political influence built up in this sector under Fianna Fail guidance but without at the same time making more or cheaper houses for the working class.

Workers carry the load

But if the magnates of the construction industry and the government are at loggerheads over the direction the industry should move in, they are both united in their attempts to make the workers carry the load.

The Construction Federation Industry is actually boasting about the large number of redundancies in its sector. On October the 31st, Tom Reynolds, Managing Director of CIE said that a survey carried out by his organisation, showed that 30% of building workers had been laid off. But paradoxically, Paddy Duffy, Secretary of the Building Workers Unions (who once had a bit of a name for himself as a "left-winger") rushed to cover up for his colleague, James Tully, by denying the report!

In the meantime the building workers suffer from the deflationary attacks of the government and the powerstruggle between the National Coalition and Fianna Fail. Their plight is aggravated by the terrible conditions in the industry. For instance, most workers receive only a ten minute break in the mornings and thirty minutes for lunch. Combined with this, sites are continually breaking up and contract labour is usually introduced. All this makes it very difficult to unionise the building workers — only about 40% of unskilled workers and 15% of tradesmen are organised. Consequently the workers on the construction industry are very weak when confronted with the machinations of the employer and government.

Despite this weakness, these workers have to fight not only their immediate employers but also the government. The governments deflationary attack on the whole working class is aimed firstly at the building workers. They occupy the front line in the long battle that lies ahead. Apart from fighting for immediate improvements and reforms they must raise such demands — no matter how difficult it will be to win them — **as nationalisation and state intervention, a scheme of public works sharing all work with no loss of pay and the resignation from the government of the Labour Ministers, which can win the support of the working class as a whole.**

3. CAR WORKERS RESIST

On a European scale, the car industry is sinking into a decline. Various causes are at the root of this. Some are of a long term structural nature, while others exist at the level of the current economic recession.

International crisis

The structural crisis in the industry can be related to a phenomonen appearing in many industries but more immediately in key sectors such as cars, and this is the crisis of overproduction. In order to meet this problem, the auto-empries have had to make huge cutbacks in production. For example in the first quarter of 1974, production was cut in:

France	**by**	**2.7%**
U.S.A.	**by**	**28%**
Germany	**by**	**18.3%**
G. Britain	**by**	**26%**

Unemployment in the car industry in the United States is now 20% and General Motors accounted for more than two-thirds of all lay-offs.

The decline in international car profits has been sensational. Again, for the first quarter of 1974, profits declined in:

General Motors	**by**	**85%**
American II	**by**	**58%**
Nissems	**by**	**58%**
Fords	**by**	**66%**
Toyota	**by**	**83%**

British Leyland lost £16.5 million before taxes in the 6 month period ending March 31st 1974, compared with £22.8 million profit registered in the previous comparable period; **Fiat** found itself in the red and **Citroen** narrowly avoided bankruptcy The problem of market saturation has also added to the crisis. The annual growth rate for the total number of vehicles, has dropped in many European countries by several per cent. Current production is increasingly limited to meeting needs for replacement. It tends less and less to increase the number of cars in general. This could only be widely changed if the real income of the more poorly paid strata of working people rose significantly or if automobile prices dropped substantially.

The current general recession throughout the Western capitalist economy has also had its specific effects on the car industry. The high rise in oil prices has made it more difficult for car-owners to continue running a car, particularly these of the lowest income group of car owners i.e. skilled, semi-skilled, white-collar workers. Other features such as the deflationary policies of the various governments in Europe, which leads inevitably to massive unemployment, greater wage restraint and severe credit restriction are huge deterrents to prospective car-buyers.

THE S.D.L.P.

The continuing wave of sectarian killings and attacks is a direct attempt linked with the high level of repression in the ghettoes – to smash the resistance against British Imperialist strategy of a return to Stormont. A major aspect of the hand-over to Loyalism is the process of 'Ulsterisation'; in less euphemistic terms this means the official arming of the paramilitary organisations and their incorporation into the repressive machinery of the state. The RUC is now being equipped with armoured vehicles and there is mass recruitment into the UDR and the RUC Reserves from Loyalist organisations.

Despite the historic role which the RUC have played as the (official) armed wing of the Northern state ever since partition, including their vicious attacks on the Catholic ghettoes of Belfast and Derry in 1969, the Catholic middle classes had their view expressed the other day by Fitt and a member of the Catholic hierarchy – Dr. Philbin. Fitt called for a return of the RUC, to the ghettoes to protect the Catholic population from the Loyalist murder squads. The assassinations are a method of blackmailing the minority into acceptance of the RUC and Fitt is playing the British strategy right down the line. However the SDLP quickly realised that a call of this nature without even the transparent facade of demanding a restructured police force could lead to them losing what credibility they do have among the anti-unionist working class. Consequently Hume made a speech reverting to the old line of a police force representative of the community. The 'Irish Times' succinctly described Hume's speech as being " . . . . in stark contrast to recent appeals from the SDLP leader Gerry Fitt and the Bishop of Down and Conor Dr. Philbin."

Contradictions

The confusion shown by the SDLP over what line they should take over the assassination is symptomatic of their precarious position as a group with a political future within a Northern Ireland which is returning to a pre-1968 set-up. The class interest of the SDLP is to get democratic rights and equal opportunity for the middle-class Catholic elements, but it can only hope to achieve this by getting mass support from the anti-unionist working class, which means making militant sounds; simultaneously they are tying to win respectability to gain acceptance throughout the unionist sections of the middle-class. This has led in the past year to very reactionary positions on the rent and rates strike, the death of Michael Gaughan, the Price Sisters, the ending of internment and now the idea of a return to the R.U.C.

A closer look at the SDLP shows that it is a totally parasitic organisation which because it is caught up in the paradox of the 6 county statelet has no real perspective for growth.

The future for the minority is one of increasing repression from the British Army and the forces of Loyalism and the obvious recourse of the anti-Unionist working class is to prepare for defence against this, which means that the SDLP will be totally outflanked. The SDLP can only gain strength when the forces of Loyalism and unionism are weak, but if these forces are weak then the anti-imperialist forces must be correspondingly strong, which means that the SDLP can only get anywhere on the back of working class upsurges. The paradoxical thing is that as soon as the SDLP get anywhere in terms of credibility they immediately start losing strength because they act as a brake on the anti-imperialist forces, by putting forward ideas which are concerned with creating the optimal conditions for the flowering of the middle class.

They do not wish to support the anti-imperialist struggle itself – which means the smashing of the 6 county statelet – as this would mean the question of socialism would be directly raised which is directly against their class interests. Because they act as a brake on the struggle the forces of Loyalism are able to regroup and the question of defence is then posed as far as the anti-unionist population are concerned. Consequently the objective conditions which allowed the SDLP to develop as an adjunct to the national struggle are partly destroyed by themselves.

Dangerous

It is for these reasons that the SDLP are a very dangerous threat to the anti-unionist working class.

In the coming period the tasks of the anti-imperialists are quite clear. They must unite to regain leadership of the mass movement by showing the way forward, and this is the political and physical preparation of the ghettoes for defence against the return to protestant ascendancy. The upsurge around the burning of Long Kesh shows that the will to resist is still there, it is therefore inconceivable that the return to Stormont will happen without resistance. The strength of the resistance relates directly to the amount of preparation, so it is of VITAL IMPORTANCE that all anti-imperialist groups unite to prepare the way.

THE COLLABORATORS

At the 'Irish Press' London Office, we hear that the large colour poster of Tory leader Edward Heath, which adorned the editorial office during the British Election has been removed.

This is not because it was thought that an office of the 'Irish Press' (Do cum Gloire De agus Onora na hEireann) was a strange place to hang the picture of the man who gave the order for Bloody Sunday.

It appears that the walls are being repainted.

SURPRISE FOR BRENDAN

When news of the Provo mass break-out from Portlaoise Prison hit London, the new 'Independent Radio News' – "the first with the news" – whose correspondents include some of the more notorious of the Cruiser's hacks, informed its listeners that among the batch of prisoners to escape was Brendan Hughes, the former O/C of the Provos' Belfast Brigade.

This news came as something of a surprise to Brendan, who was at that moment reading the Sunday newspapers while sitting on his bunk in Long Kesh.

PLAIN SAILING FOR THE CRUISER?

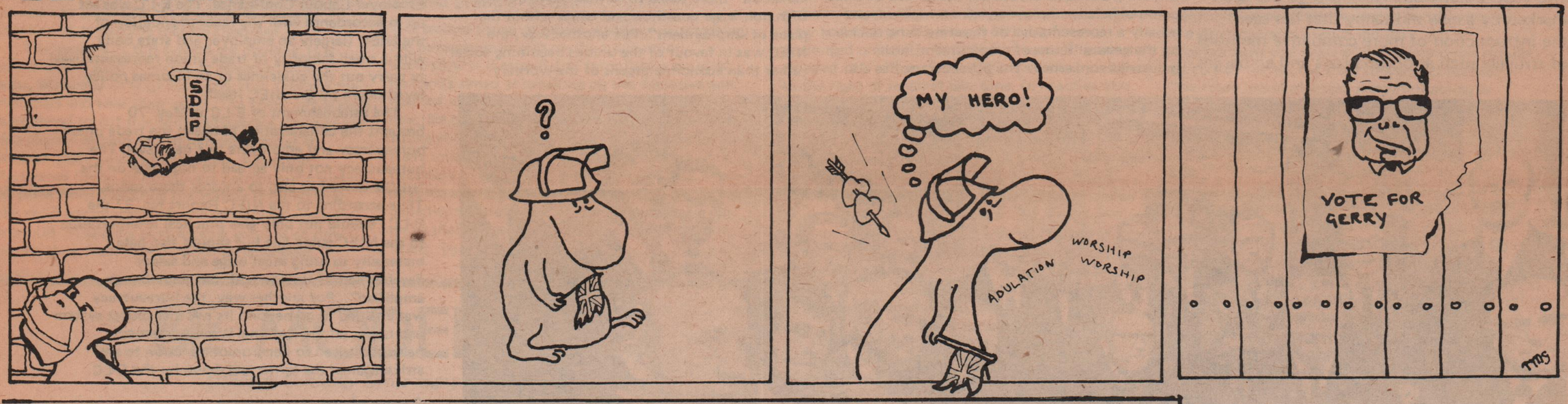
Some of Conor Cruise O'Brien's colleagues are a little worried that they may have a megalomaniac on their hands. The worried ones are those who have some faith in the Labour Party being able to advance the interests of the working class. They see in the Cruiser a man who regards the working class support for the Labour Party as one of the rungs on his Irish ladder to international prominence.

But others are far from upset about his performance. It wasn't the cold weather that had the deepest blue Fine Gaelers rubbing their hands after his attack on Mary Robinson and others.

"But", said a Labour supporter, "he supports the Labour movement."

Like a rope supports a hanging man, perhaps?

BERTY THE BRIT.



The car industry in Ireland

From this basic outline of the overall crisis in the car industry, we can build a picture of the problems of the Irish situation and see how the collapse of the Irish car industry fits into an overall framework.

Established in 1933, the assembly plants here were protected by special tariffs to ensure the economic viability of these Irish subsidiaries against attemptes by the big motor corporations to distribute cars directly in Ireland. The introduction of Free Trade, with Ireland's entry into the EEC has meant the elimination of these tariffs and the motor corporations are now able to go ahead with their plans to change the Irish car industry from assembly to distribution.

In many of the larger plants in the South the number of already assembled vehicles imported has increased. Figures from the Central Statistics Office for the period 1971/1972 show that the increase was 7%. We can reasonably assume that this figure has increased for 1973/1974.

As far back as 1962 this situation was foreseen by both Fianna Fail government and the trade union leadership. A report issued at that time by the "Committee on Industrial Relations" (a committee including members of the trade union movement) on the future of the car assembly industry stated:

"It can be taken therefore that it is a virtually unanimous view of the industry that motor assembly in this country will cease under free trade" and that "the only hope seen in the trade for the continuation of the assembly is government intervention".

Twelve years have passed and absolutely no aid has been given to save the industry.

The car industry is one of the largest employers in the industrial sector, in fact the seventh biggest. Approximately 7,000 workers are engaged in the industry. In the next two years up to 2,500 workers will be immediately affected by the "rationalisation" of the industry. This ultimately means the closure of the assembly plants. In one, already 130 workers have been "termporarily" laid off.

No market

The large motor companies have been saying that the crisis in the Irish car industry has arisen not because of their rationalisation plans but because of a fall-off in market demand. As we have shown above there has been an international slump in car sales. But this argument doesn't fit the Irish situation. For example, in America there is one car for every 2.2 persons while in Ireland the ratio is one car for every 6.75. So there is great scope for expanding the Irish market even while the international market is shrinking.

As far as the market area for car-sales in Ireland is concerned, a report from the Central Bank (Autumn 1974) is a good indication to the real situation. While on a year to year basis, new cars registrations were down by 13.7%, on a quarter to quarter basis, for the third quarter of 1974, registrations rose by almost 25%. This is a good indication that the demand for cars exists, despite all the other problems outlined.

The underlying basis of the decline in Ireland is the relationship of the Irish assembly plants to the rest of Europe. The profitability of maintaining plants in the outlying and underdeveloped countries such as Ireland is no longer guaranteed. Technically backward, in comparison to its competitors, the Irish plants are one of the first areas to be included in the major motor corporations plans of rationalisation. For example, what a European subsidiary of General Motors can produce with 30,000 workers, an American plan can produce with 7,000 workers. As far as the employers are concerned, with the low level of production here, the needs of the Irish market can be satisfied with increased importation under a scheme of rationalisation.

Car industry must be retained

The arguement that the car assembly plants cannot be maintained is fallacious. There is a definite demand on the Irish market. The problem exists in maintaining the economic viability of the industry and the employment of several thousand workers. The demand to **nationalise** the industry must be placed on the government. It must be impelled to intervene to retain the industry, by direct subsidisation and the establishment of special tariffs to protect it. The involvement of successive countries in the EEC has never prevented them from determining their own interests, so workers should not be put off with warnings of "community regulations".

This is the only real alternative, the only real solution. Compare this perspective with official policy of the trade union leadership within the industry, particularly of the ITGWU and the ATGWU. Strong promises of a hard fight 12 months ago have given way to virtual inactivity. The trump card for these gentlemen is the policy of "job for job", which in effect is a totally defeatist policy. Even if they were prepared to prevent the closure of any assembly plants, until all these employed were immediately re-employed elsewhere (which they are not) this perspective completely side-steps the issue of the retention of the industry and the current level of employment. For it is quite obvious, that the industry will be fully rationalised, that is it will contract and the level of employment intended will be much lower.

Leadership is vital

It is patently clear that the trade union leadership has offered no direct challenge against the threatened closures. The only real response has come from the shop floor. Up to now this response has been fairly weak and limited in its thrust. The Car Workers Action Committee could become a focal point for many workers threatened with redundancy. But its credibility depends on the alternative it presents and the action it undertakes to back these alternatives up. Direct action is vitally necessary to eliminate the apathy and confusion of many car workers. A strong lead will encourage a strong response.

The developments of a struggle by the car workers will be of great importance to other threatened industrial workers. Traditionally, these have been one of the strongest and most militant sections; they headed several protests against Ireland's entry into the EEC; on the introduction of internment in the North, they marched out of the plants in protest; they also lead the rise on the strike charts in 1970. Their struggles can provide many lessons for the future.

ANNE SPEED

RTE: BLUE SHIRTS AND BROWN TONGUES!

Even after Watergate, absurd statements by government officials and the like still have the power to amaze.

A fine example was provided by RTE the other day, in relation to the inquiry into the "7 Days" programme on internment and the disciplinary action on the producers.

"The management", reported the Irish Times (Oct. 31st), "has strongly denied that the inquiry was in any way influenced by the displeasure of the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Dr. O'Brien, at the programme concerned."

Whoever issued that denial is in the wrong job; they should be writing comedy scripts.

But seriously, the message is coming through loud and clear from the Cruiser. RTE is the State's broadcasting service; any programme on a controversial topic must take the line of government policy; where there is no government policy, British policy is the line to be taken.

In fact, the order of the day in RTE is "Blue Shirts and Brown Tongues."

FRANK

REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP

38 Clanawly Road. DUBLIN 5

I would like more information about the RMG and its activities

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE TRADE UNION LEADERS, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE EMPLOYERS

A new phase of the class struggle in Ireland has opened in the South. After successfully slowing down the growth of wage increases by means of three national wage agreements, the government and employers are getting ready to limit wage increases to the same rise as the increase in prices. By doing this they hope to retain the full benefit of increased production not for those who produce but for those who own capital.

While workers patiently bore the brunt of wage restraints for the past three or four years, they are now beginning to show their resentment. For the first time since the dramatic decline of the strike wave in 1970 there is evidence of a new resurgence. The number of work days lost in strikes in the first half of this year alone equalled the number of work-days lost in the previous two years combined. This upsurge has been marked by a new militancy that has seen the introduction of more combative methods of struggle such as occupations and embargos.

The force of this latest strike wave can be gauged from the fact that while the first two National Wage Agreements were strictly adhered to, the third Agreement has been breached at least half a dozen times since its acceptance a few months ago.

Under the impact of this new combativity the employers' plans for the future have been put in jeopardy. Their only hope of salvation at this point is to deepen their collaboration with the *leaders* of the Trade Union movement. This means going a step further from voluntary National Wage Agreements to a more comprehensive "social contract" which would be backed up by legal punishment for workers who do not abide by it. But it is only through the closest co-operation with the big bureaucrats in the Trade Unions that this project could be carried out.

The trade union leaders themselves are playing a double game. Because of the feeling among rank and file trade unionists they cannot come out immediately and directly with acceptance of the employers proposals. They must convince ordinary workers that any deal that is made on *their* terms is the best possible deal for workers. So they make disapproving noises towards the government and employers. For example, after the Federated Union of Employers hinted that its members would not implement the threshold clause of the 3rd National Wage Agreement the union leaders issued a strong warning. Again, after the recent Labour Party Conference, Michael Mullens of the ITGWU slammed the Labour Party leadership and denounced the economic policy of the National Coalition.

But behind this verbal war, the trade union leaders are getting ready to sell-out. It wasn't today or yesterday that the idea of collaboration arose. The preparations for "incorporating" the trade unions into the legal framework of the state have been going on for years. The history of these preparations is the best exposure of the current "left-wing" phrasemongering of the trade union bureaucrats and it also reveals what the true objectives of the "social-contract" will be.

Behind the collaboration

Since the Second World War there has been a tendency towards the creation of a permanent organisational framework or set of institutions within which agreement can be reached between the trade union bureaucrats and the employers without too much friction. Through these organisations the bureaucracy shakes off the control of the rank and file and subjects the trade unions to the interests of capitalism. Since the 1940s the trade unions have become involved in over twenty *Joint Labour Committees* (covering all major industries) comprised of trade union officials, employers, representatives, and usually a representative of the state, who decide on the general terms of employment in the industries concerned. The bureaucracy has also become involved with the employers and state in a host of other on-going bodies, which attempt to regulate the relations between Labour and Capital, such as the *National Industrial Economic Council, the Irish National Productivity Committee, the Committee of Industrial Progress, An Foras Forbartha etc.*

The most important thing to note here, for the moment, is that the *Employer Labour Conference and the recent National Economic and Social Council,* through which it is hoped to negotiate a more general social contract are the most significant products of this post-war process. Without these a general restriction on wages would be difficult and there would be no hope of withstanding the present, deepening recession.

The government and the employers realised this from an early date. From the time they began to re-orientate their economic policy in the late '50's they understood that extremely close collaboration with the trade union bureaucracy was necessary if they were going to succeed. The *First Programme for Economic Expansion* stressed that **"The success of any policy of economic development will depend on the effective and continuous co-operation of the trade unions in promoting increased productivity and in avoiding increases in wages and salaries".** The NIEC Report No. 27 pointed out that the national wage agreements depended on *"an explicit committment by the government, the Irish Employers Confederation and the ICTU to exercise their particular respponsibility fully towards creating the general understanding and environment in which an incomes and prices policy would have reasonable prospects of success".* The main burden of responsibility was however placed on the trade unions. Hardly a word was said about the government or employers. But a number of "short-comings" of the unions were brought to the notice of the bureaucracy for "urgent attention".

Among these was the fact that **"the present trade union structure tends to keep attention focused on maintaining existing wage and salary relativities and differentials rather than on reaching concensus on what these should be".**

The democracy of the unions was also assailed. **"Furthermore" said the report "the emphasis on democracy at all levels within trade unions . . . frequently makes internal communications cumbersome and decision-making difficult." The sad outcome was that the top bureaucrats and chief collaborators "representing the trade union movement as a whole, cannot impose (!) its views on affiliated unions (of the ICTU)".**

Another noticable "short-coming" according to the NIEC report was the emphasis placed on wages. **"In some cases" the report euphemistically lamented "there tends to be insufficient concern with non-wage questions and issues within the place of employment".** Put another way, the NIEC was in favour of the unions becoming social rather than economic organs of the workers.

The struggle for success

Although there was already a high degree of collaboration with the employers, the bureaucracy was unable to move immediately to correct such "defects". Moves towards a *National Labour Management Conference* were set in motion in 1961. Attempts were made at that time to impose a wage freeze but resistance was too strong. As the pro-establishment economist David O'Mahony noted **"Congress found the suggestion unacceptable in view of pressure from the members of its affiliated unions for wage increases which made it impossible for the unions to accept or implement a wages formula and so the matter was dropped"** *[Economic Aspects of Industrial Relations]*. **The following year the bureaucracy withdrew altogether from the NLMC.**

While the process of incorporation was slowed down it was not reversed. The bureaucracy still continued to collaborate with capitalist society through other joint bodies and of course continued to accept appointments to the *Labour Courts.* At the same time the rank and file struggled on.

The sixties saw the greatest strike wave in Irish history. A graph of the days lost per worker through strikes during the first four years of the decade shows that there was a massive explosion in the economic struggle. From 1964 to 1967 a decline set in. But from 1967 to 1970 the strike wave rose in an unbroken climb to an all time high in 1970. During this latter phase the struggle went out of control. Unofficial actions became very popular and in 1968 over 40% of disputes were without official sanction.

The government, employers and bureaucrats realised that a real challange was posed by this build-up. At the same time they understood the weariness of the workers and the weak points of the strike wave. The role of the industrial labour force — the backbone of the working class — was beginning to decline. In the new upsurge it accounted for 44% of workers involved in disputes and 36% of days lost. In addition, apart from the exceptional year of 1969 (which was swelled by lock-outs owing to the Maintenance men dispute) the overall number of workers involved in disputes was declining even on the previous period of ebb tide.

Anxious about the acceleration of the strike wave and aware of its limitations the bureaucracy decided to act without further delay. The first step in this direction was taken when the "two-tier" picketing system with the aim of abolishing the independence and initiative of shop-floor militants, was introduced. Once this had been implemented and tested further steps were taken to revive the old *National Labour Management Conference* under the new title of the Employer-Labour Conference. The E-LC was set up in accordance with the recommendation of the NIEC (largely an employer and state body with a small minority of trade union representatives) to carry out the guidelines of an incomes policy layed down by the NIEC itself.

The establishment of E-LC in May '70 brought the collaboration between the trade union bureaucracy and employers to a new level. The bureaucracy not only agreed to negotiate on the NIEC's terms but also to enforce these terms. Thus according to the NIEC Report No. 27 the E-LC **"should not only give practical interpretation to the NIEC guide-line but should also help materially to bring most wage and salary developments into line with the guide line so amplified".** Put another way, the bureaucracy was enabled to go beyond its two-tier picket system and under all the National Wage Agreements has undertaken to deny union sanction to any strike against the terms laid down by the E-LC.

A new phase

The signing of the first wage agreement saw the highest climax of bureaucracy-employer collaboration in the history of the Irish trade union movement and a new phase in the bureaucracies integration into capitalist society. Now a new and higher phase is being prepared.

This new phase began after the ICTU annual Congress last year when the *National Economic and Social Council* was set up. The NESC differs from the Employer-Labour Conference in that it represents not only the industrial big business sector but that it also includes the big farmers representatives, especially the Irish Farmers Association. The N.E.S.C. differs from the E-LC also in that its purpose is not only to plan wage restrictions but to plan for the *whole* economy.

Although the government is not directly represented on the N.E.S.C. and although the N.E.S.C. has no legal stature, the government intends to use it as a weapon in its fight against the workers. It is also clear that some form of legislation that would bind workers and employers together, is on its way. On October the 24th for instance, the Minister for Finance Mr. Ryan, met with members of the NESC to discuss ways and means of curbing inflation. At a gathering of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce the following day, he announced his intention of having further links with this body. And the F.U.E. after its negotiations with the government last September called on them "to establish an independent commission to examine the legal and institutional framework of industrial relations and recommend improvements". They also said ominously that the trade unions support would be sought for such "improvements". The improvements envisaged by the F.U.E. are no doubt along the lines recommended by the N.I.E.C. report i.e. the elimination of democracy etc.
This approach was further underlined by the Autumn Central Bank Report which placed the comprehensive planning goals of the N.E.S.C. at the centre of any proposal for keeping the economy intact during the current recession.

RMG TRADE UNION CAUCUS

HOW TO FIGHT THE T.U. BUREAUCRACY

RMG TRADE UNION CAUCI

In the fight against the latest attack of the government and employers on the working class the bureaucratic leaders of the trade union movement are acting as the "fifth column" of the government and employers. Just as it is necessary to plan a defence against these latest attacks it is necessary to campaign against the trade union bureaucracy.

Such a campaign will be successful only if it endeavours (i) to drive a wedge between the bureaucracy and the employers and (ii) to eliminate the independent and privileged position of the bureaucracy within the trade union movement itself are carried out.

First prong of attack

To advance the first prong of the attack a key demand should be **for the withdrawal of trade union representatives from all government and employer sponsored committees and boards.** Chief among these of course is the Employer-Labour Conference and the National Economic and Social Council. But the demand should go right down to the Joint Labour Committees in industry and the management-employee liaison committees in the factories.

It will also be necessary to keep a strict check on the typo of person entering the trade union apparatus. Several years experience on the shop-floor or in the service of the labour movement should be an obligatory qualifiction for every paid official. All connections with the Jesuit inspired and employer sponsored "Workers College' must be severed. Instead the trade unions themselves should provide their own educational facilities which would train and educate the leaders of the movement in accordance with working class standards.

In the context of a national wage agreement a very important demand, designed to prevent the bureaucracy leaning towards the employers for support, should be for the abolition of the "check off system". The check-off-system is an arrangement whereby the employers deduct union dues from the workers pay-packet and send it direct to the trade union headquarters. Although only 8% of companies operate this system 118,200 trade unionists are already covered by it and since the Employer Labour Conference took a decision to generalise the practice in January '73 it is bound to become more widespread.

The dangers of this system are obvious. It is when largely shop stewards go round to collect subs, especially in large concerns, that they see their members and hear their views. The check-off-system is designed to cut this contact between the Steward and his/her section to a minimum in order to weaken trade union effectiveness. When the *Federated Union of Employers* carried out a survey of these firms operating the system it found that the chief advantages from the employers viewpoint were (ii) **"it saved a considerable amount of time on the shop floor" (ii) "it avoided squabbles concerning arrears and union membership" (iii) "helped improve our industrial relations".** [from an F.U.E. survey]

Also of course, in many unions large numbers of workers who are very alienated from the movement neglect to pay their dues. In a sense this is a passive (and let us hastily add, a futile) protest against the bureaucracy. In some unions, such as the Workers Union of Ireland for example this is a great embarrassment as it shows how little the union bureaucrats are actually doing for the rank and file. The check-off-system lets the bureaucracy off the hook by covering up this annoying reminder of its treachery and collaboration.

The check-off-system is an assault by the employers and the trade union bureaucracy on the integrity of the trade union movement. It puts in the hands of the employers and important aspect of trade union activity. It is more particularly an attack on the prerogatives of the shop-stewards who in most cases substitute the only real leadership the rank and file has.

Accordingly this system must be fought tooth and nail. As a counter-blast, it should be demanded that the system not only be dropped but that the shop-stewards be given time off at the expense of the employers to properly carry out their duties and responsibilities towards their members.

Second prong of attack

The second prong of attack must aim at smashing the bureaucracies grip on the trade union apparatus. It is essential to formulate a series of demands aimed at breaking up the exclusive and ossified nature of the bureaucratic elite. The practice of appointing officers and officials from above must be stopped. In the early days of the trade union movement such appointments were necessary in order to organise in new areas. These days have long gone and the practice is no longer expedient or democratic. The bureaucracy hangs on to their prerogative so that it can perpetuate itself. To combat such usurpations of rank and file rights, the right of appointment should be abolished and replaced by **the election** of every official and officer from below.

ITGWU delegates at ICTU Special Conference Liberty Hall, March 7.

One of the chief ways the bureaucracy tries to stabalise itself and create its own internal cohesion is by appointing officers and officials for a prolonged or indefinite period of time. This must be stopped. All officers and officials should be subject to the right of recall at any time. In practice this would mean that an officer or official would have to stand for re-election at any time on the demand of one fifth of his/her section or branch etc.

It has been estimated that only 10% of the rank and file actively participate in trade union activity. This would give a figure of 50,000 activists which even at that seems a bit exaggerated. Based on an attendance at Branch AGM's of the ITGWU it would appear that general participation is as low as 2.5%. Either way these figures make the effective point that general interest by members in the running of the trade unions is very low.

This state of affairs is acquiest in, if not actively encouraged, by the officers and officials. They rely heavily on the apathy and disinterest of general members to enscounce themselves in privileged positions. They make no real effort to get mass involvement because they realise that this would threaten their positions.

Trade union militants and socialists should fight this by demanding a minimum quorum for all meetings. An absolute minimum attendance of 30% should be required for all meetings and a plan of campaign should be initiated to get members involvement so that the quorum could be raised much higher.

At the present time even this quorum would probably penalise the activity of the trade union movement because participation is so low. The only way to increase participation is by turning the unions into real fighting instruments in the interest of the workers. That is what the bureaucrats fear most and that is why the demand for a minimum quorum will be a powerful weapon against them.

Within the trade union movement there is a growing attack by the bureaucracy on the shop-stewards. In many cases shop stewards are relegated to a secondary role or excluded from negotiations that directly affect their area of work. This is done under the pretext of centralised bargaining. But there is no reaon why centralised bargaining should not be carried out directly by the shop stewards in each industry. All arrangements and deals with the employers should be carried out by the shop stewards concerned. The trade union officials, instead of acting as negotiators should be present simply as advisors.

Conclusion

The above demands are by no means exhaustive. In addition they are necessarily presented in a schematic manner. In some unions some of the demands don't apply. For instance the right of recall already exists in a few of the smaller unions. In other unions officials don't get paid at all, while in a number of unions rank and file involvement is reasonably high etc. It is up to activists in each union to elaborate a comprehensive programme dealing with the specific problems of their union. One thing is certain however, the bureaucracy is a distinct and autonomous social layer working in the interests of capitalism and any programme for activity in the trade union movement must take this as its fundamental starting point.

Dr. T. K. Whitaker, the director of the Central Bank, went even further in interviews with the news media when he said that legislation would be needed to penalise any "maverick group of workers" who opposed the plans of the NESC.

Despite the left-wing and radical platitudes of the trade union leaders, they have already declared their willingness to work through the N.E.S.C. At the Labour Party Conference in Galway the trade union delegates vociferously urged the creation of a "general economic plan" to be developed through the NESC. Their main criticism was that the government was not acting quickly enough to do this.

The stage now seems set for a new major onslaught on workers living standards. In the fight to defend themselves workers must become aware that they will have to oppose their trade union "leaders" just as much as the employers.

BE MODERATE!

Although Connolly wrote many articles criticising the trade union leaders and "fakirs" of his day he also turned to verse to express himself. The following few stanzas written by him in 1910 seem almost to have been composed with some of the "fainthearted" leaders of todays labour movement in mind!

Some men, fainthearted, ever seek
Our programme to retouch
And will insist, where'er they speak,
That we demand too much
Tis passing strange, yet I declare
Such statements cause me mirth,
For our demands most moderate are:
We only want the earth!

"Be moderate!" the trimmers cry,
Who dread the tyrants thunder
"You ask too much, and people fly
From you aghast in wonder".
Tis passing strange, yet I declare
Such statement cause me mirth
For our demands most moderate are,
We only want the earth!

Our masters all, a godly crew
Whose hearts throb for the poor,
Their sympathies assure us too,
If our demand were fewer
Most generous souls! But please observe
What they enjoy from birth
Is all we ever had the nerve
To ask, that is THE EARTH

The "Labour Fakir", full of guile,
Base doctrine ever preaches,
And, whilst he bleeds the rank and file
Tame moderation teaches
Yet, in his despite, we'll see the day,
When, with sword in its girth,
Labour shall march in broad array
To seize its own, THE EARTH

For Labour long, with sighs and tears
To its oppressors knelt,
But never yet to aught save fears,
Did heart of tyrant melt.
We need not kneel, our cause is high,
Of true men there's no dearth.
And our victorious rallying cry
Shall be, "We Want The Earth".

JAMES CONNOLLY

ADVERT.

NATIONAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE

The National Federation of Shop Stewards and Rank and File Committees is holding a National Delegate Conference on December 7

The purpose of the Conference is to bring together trade unionists throughout the country to find ways of defeating redundancy. Also to discuss how to defeat the threat of wage restraint. The aim is to work out a policy of action.

If you wish to attend this Conference, you will have to be delegated by your appropriate trade union organisation, ie, Union Executive, District Committee, Trades Council, Branch, Shop or Section Committee, or Shop Steward.

So if you want credentials, get the organisation which will be delegating you to fill out this form and send it to 12 Montague St., Dublin.

Name of Trade Union Body .....

Address .....

.....

PLEASE SEND US CREDENTIALS FOR ..... DELEGATES AND FIND ENCLOSED .....
FOR CONFERENCE FEES. (50p PER DELEGATE).

DANUS FIGHTS ON

At a meeting in the occupied Danus factory in Limerick on November 11th, Frank Roche, a Dublin trade unionist and member of the *Plough* editorial board, stressed the need for greater publicity for workers' struggles, with the aim of drawing on the support of other trade unionists.

Speaking at the invitation of the workers, he said that whole industries were threatened with closure, in particular the textiles and car assembly industries. It was important that workers be informed about each others struggles, so that the problems could be faced in a united and coordinated way.

INDUSTRIES THREATENED

Without publicity and without seeking out the support and solidarity of others workers, struggles such as the Danus sit-in could become isolated very quickly. It was important to realise that other workers were also similarly threatened and that the possibility existed of linking up struggles in different areas.

The Genesco plant at Kinsale, Goodbody's in Waterford and Reg Armstrong's were given as particular examples. As the impact of full Free Trade within the EEC hits the Irish economy harder, the entire textile and car assembly industries are threatened with closure in a very short space of time.

Frank Roche referred to the threat by O'Donovan, the owner of Danus, to send in the Gardai. It was clear that defence would be important, and there were many ways they could prepare to hold off an assault by the Gardai.

Since O'Donovan had withdrawn his offer to pay them 10% of the sale of the suits they are holding in the factory, the remedy must be for the workers to sell the suits themselves. He gave the example of the *Lip* watch factory in France, where the workers successfully distributed the watches that they had made.

Danus have given a lead to all workers facing factory closures with their militant action of sitting-in. Their struggle must be taken further by involving other workers. The size and militancy of the march in Dublin in support of the Reg Armstrong's workers, who are also sitting-in, shows that there is a vast amount of potential support which can – and must – be brought into the struggle against redundancies.

Messages of support and donations to:
Eddie Byrnes
18 Cathedral Place
Limerick.

LABOUR PARTY TURNS RIGHT

Many changes have occurred within the Labour Party in the last four or five years, but easily the most apparent change at its recent Galway conference was the lack of any real political opposition. It is clearly necessary to place this change in the context of the present economic recession.

Why "The Seventies will be Socialist" slogan?

The expansion of capital in the late sixties gave the working class a chance to make real, if temporary, gains, and to build confidence in its own strength. This was reflected in particular by an influx of socialist youth into the Labour Party and also in a leftward swing by the leadership. The slogan *"The seventies will be socialist"* was a social democratic reaction to the optimism which this expansion brought with it. Social democracy by its very nature is used by the employers in times when it is both necessary and possible to buy off layers of the working class.

A changed party – a changed role

The period since 1971 in Ireland has seen the onset of an economic recession with ever-increasing annual inflation rates. This has changed the role envisaged for the Labour Party by certain sections of Irish and foreign capital. The Labour Party linked with the trade union movement has become a willing pawn in the attempt to make the working class and other oppressed layers, accept cut-backs in their standard of living. In Britain, the strong social democratic tradition of the British labour movement has made this task that much easier for Wilson and Co. Historically, in Ireland Parliament has been a much weaker force than in Britain and the Irish working class has traditional republican sympathies. The trade unions have, in fact, a largely nominal relationship to the Labour Party. This divergence was notable at the recent Labour Party conference, where trade union resolutions came out strongly against the government's deflationary policy (e.g. on unemployment) for revision of the current taxation system and for more workers involvement in industrial decision making. The ITGWU also made a strong criticism of the way the discussion on the North was railroaded.

Leaving aside the success or otherwise of the Labour Party in government in integrating the trade union movement through a social contract, it's changed role is reflected by its present membership. This was clear at the conference. Five years ago the practice of unanimous voting, bureaucratic stifling of discussion, and opposition in degree but not in method, seemed remote. Yet all three of these were strongly in evidence in Galway this year. Many resolutions began by endorsing the present policies and work of the national coalition or of a particular minister. Most of the resolutions failed to take up the political issues involved. For example, the discussion on education did not raise the question of the recent cutbacks in expenditure or of the sell-out of the community schools. Where have the Labour left gone?

At the Cork conference on coalition in 1971, the vote on participating in coalition was close. It was narrow enough to give the anti-coalitionists over 300 votes out of 800 delegates. At this year's conference the same notion was defeated by a near-unanimous 860 votes to 40. It seems unlikely, from the record of the National Coalition, that the other 260-300 delegates have changed their minds over the last few years. A much more likely proposition is that they have left ot been expelled. This has been a natural product of the transformation of the Labour Party. Perhaps the most memorable expulsion was that of all the members of the *Socialist Labour Alliance* on the grounds that this grouping constituted a separate organisation. Members of this Alliance had attempted to attack the whole social democratic analysis used by the Labour Party, and had anticipated its partnership in government with the erstwhile Blueshirts – Fine Gael. It is worthwhile examining the present left in the Labour Party and see along what lines of analysis their critiques lie.

The new labour opposition

The relationship between social democracy and trade unionism stretches further than the fact that both arise "spontaneously" among the working class. Trade unionism attempts to better the economic lot of the worker within the confines of the labour market i.e. to get better conditions of sale for his/her labour power. Social democracy performs a similar function on the political front. It accepts the form of democracy (i.e. parliamentary) imposed by the bourgeoisie and tries to use Parliament to ease the social hardship of the oppressed. It follows from this that any revolutionary critique of the Labour party must begin from the standpoint of rejecting the question as posed by the bourgeoisie i.e. parliamentary democracy or dictatorship.

Any analysis must begin from the objective need of the working class for socialism and must pose a strategy for the seizure of state power by that class. This, the "Trotskyist" *Militant* group for instance fails completely to do. On the contrary they foster illusions in the capacity of a Labour government elected on a "socialist programme" to change society fundamentally. Their second basic mistake is to suppose that the accumulation of economic struggles will lead the working class to a revolutionary consciousness. In this, they ignore Lenin's argument that revolutionary political ideas must be brought to the working class from without – hence the need for a *"revolutionary intelligentsia"*. It is this misunderstanding which leads the Militant group to ignore the National Question and the sharpening social crisis of the capitalist system, which is posing such questions as the role of the family, the resultant sexual oppression, particularly of women and gay people, the present radicalisation of students and the increased alienation of white-collar workers.

These and other misconceptions have led the *Militant* to take up opportunist positions. For instance, while attacking the IDEA of Coalition no direct attack was made on the Labour Party leadership during the Conference. When a spokesman for the Militant was given time on radio he continuously stressed that the problem with Coalition was that Labour was in a minority and not that it was in collaboration with a right-wing capitalist party. Militant went even as far as calling on the leadership of the Party to "recognise its mistake" and withdraw from Coalition. As if the Labour Party leadership found itself holding hands with Cosgrave, Cooney, Donegan & Co. by mistake! But the capitulation of Militant went further than this. Numerous resolutions were passed **unanimously** at the conference supporting certain measure of the Coalition. The *Militant* group has not denied these reports and so we can only conclude that its members voted support for the Coalition as well. This transgresses one of the most elementary and social principles of the Marxist movement i.e. never give any support to a capitalist government because to do so is to join in in attacking the working class.

The other section of the Labour Left i.e. the *Liaison Committee of the Left* have fallen into a similar trap. In fact they represent orthodox western social democracy. Hence, their criticisms of the Labour leadership are quantitative rather than qualitative. They think 50,000 houses should or could have been built instead of 25,000. One of their spokesmen, Mattie Merrigan in fact, accepted the idea of the social contract in Britain as unity of the two wings of the labour movement.

So the changeover from a volatile divergent social democratic party to one of bureaucracy, a shrinking opposition and a new type of 'delegate', is a function of the economic recession in Ireland. Five years ago could Conor Cruise O'Brien have got away with his recent speech (in which he denounced several journalists as Provo stoodges), or Jimmy Tully with his bureaucratic threats or Corish's deliberation that he would not be bound by the decisions of conference? The present role of the Labour Party is clearly a changed one and it becomes increasingly important to extend criticisms beyond those against the leadership. The way forward for the Irish working class and oppressed must be through a revolutionary seizure of state power, not through the "gradual" changes of parliament.

BETTY PURCELL

STATEMENT BY SPAINISH COMRADES

Certain european papers, reproducing information given by the Spanish press that were directly obtained from the BPS (Social Political Brigade) have recently published information which refers to the alleged arrest of members of our leadership to the confiscation of printing material for "Combate" (our Central organ).

This information is completely false: It has nothing to do with reality.

This distortion of information fits into a campaign of prosectuion and discredit aimed at our organisation and this campaign has been intensified since the fusion between LCR and ETA VI

During this campaign attempts were made to attribute to the LCR-ETA VI actions it has nothing to do with, and to link our organisation to others that we are separated from by all kinds of deep differences; though we unconditionally defend these organisations (like ETA V, MIL, FRAP, etc.) against Francoist repression.

The most scandalous fact is the attempt made by the political police itself to attribute to us the preparation of a plan aimed at releasing ten political prisoners from the Sefovia jailhouse.

We Salute, Support and approve all iniativies taken to save militants from Franco's police. It is certain however that no concrete plan ever existed in relation to the Sefovia prison.

But this campaign is not without any purpose. It undoubtedly prepares an intensification of the repression, against out organisation and also against other political groups.

In order to fight that campaign, intensified efforts are needed — in the Spanish state and all over the world, against the Fancoist dictatorship.

All united against repression!

ITALY: behind the 'historic compromise'

Major conflicts and confrontations over the past four years, between the ruling class and workers, have added to an extremely unstable climate in Italy. The Italian Ruling class is extremely worried about the situation and is in the throes of attempts to cope with several huge problems. These are:

A. Inflation; this is rising rapidly and is expected to be in the region of 22% – 25% within a short period.

B. The problem of acquiring International Aid is a huge task. Italy needs to become more fully integrated into the European Community, to exploit these markets more fully. In stark contrast severe protection measures need to be established to maintain the economic viability of Italian industry. The European capitalist is not anxious to get caught up in the obvious contradictions!

C. Industrial Restructuration is necessary in general of the key manufacturing sectors many of which are stagnating. These need large amounts of capital investment. Again this is in stark contrast to the actual practice of the bourgeoisie who are narrowing both the areas and amounts of capital investment.

Class struggle

In this general framework the instability of the Italian ruling class's social, political and economic position becomes much clearer. There have been huge social and economic upheavals taking place at an increasingly faster rate. Throughout Italy, there has been a new wave of unemployment with an enormous increase in the number of lay-offs. The official figures for the level of unemployment is 800,000 or 4% of the active population. We can assume, however that the figures are mugh higher. The key industry in crisis is the automobile industry which had deep implications for the rest of the economy. In certain areas, unemployment is highly concentrated; for example in Naples, some 400,000 are unemployed in a population of one million inhabitants.

Given this critical situation, there are several alternatives open to the ruling class. On the one hand they can attempt economic restructuration; particularly in the automobile and chemical industry, to develop the orientation of these industries towards production of consumer goods. This is quite a correct solution in the abstract but given the huge social weight of these industries this solution could not be carried out without severe social and economic problems.

The second alternative is one of reconversion, i.e. one of narrowing the limits of production; making huge rationalisation, with the elimination of many subsidiary areas of production. Caught in the contradictions between actual problems and possible solutions, a future of mass unemployment faces Italian society.

What solutions?

It is quite obvious that the ruling class is surviving on partial solutions implemented through various political formations. Behind these solutions various political groups and sections of employers are lining up.

There are sections who, while not supporting an extreme solution of a turn towards fascism are moving towards the establishment of the strong state. The growth of these elements is best reflected in the penetration of state invervention into defective areas of industry with heavy subsidization.

Also the lower of the specific weight of the private industrial sectors is reflected in the movement of certain elements towards a solution that incorporates layers of the left labour and social democratic movement, in particular the Communist Party. The possibility of implementing this type of solution is given great credibility by the direct collaboration of the C.P. with various wings of the ruling class. This whole shift of the C.P. is given a material basis by the greatly increased weight of the "petty-bourgeoise". For example, one professional category of employment which has greatly increased has been teachers, where from 1951, 325,000 teachers employed rose to 700,000 in 1974.

The rate of unemployment has increased by 140,000 over just one year. The middle layers are being squeezed; the general worsening of their economic and social situation has encouraged these strata of society to look for "solutions". Several are looking towards the left, i.e. the reformist left, which want not to revolutionise society just to radically reform it. Smaller sections are inevitably turning towards the extreme right and ultimately pose a great danger to the working class.

Historic compromise

Since 1969 the objective trend towards a total decline of Italian society has persisted.

It is true to say however, that the strength of the working class remains intact. Blow-ups occur frequently, with the workers asserting their strength against frustration with ruling class solutions to their problems. There are frequent factory occupations, direct confrontations with intervening police etc. There are also wide expressions of discontent throughout various other layers of Italian society. Huge numbers of people, in protest against inflation, refuse to pay increases in tax, electricity etc. For several weeks, deadlock situations can exist, with vast sections of working people refusing to intervene directly against these protesting layers.

Up to now, the ruling class has imposed partial solutions, trying to bide its time. Conditions have now ripened for **an Historical Compromise.** Various sections of the bourgeoisie are now in favour of integrating the left reformist currents into a bourgeois solution. But this integration will only intensify the crisis situation.

The next two years will be a decisive period in which the Italian working class can either push forward to a revolutionary victory or be pushed backwards, either by the ruling class or by the collaboration of the C.P. in an attempt to stabilize the capitalist political and economic system.

ANNE SPEED

NEW WAVE OF CLASS STRUGGLE HITS SPAIN

A new wave of strikes have rocked Spain, focusing on the discontent of broad sections of the population. The mass movement in Spain, its morale boosted by the collapse of the dictatorships in Portugal and Greece, is now mobilizing to confront Franco's dictatorship with the most serious threat in the 35 years of its existance. The present upsurge is, however, much more than a reaction to international events but represents a major crisis in Franco's regime or, rather, the convergence of two major crises.

The political crisis of Francoism

The economic and social structures from which Francoism arose in the thirties, have undergone many changes since then, yet there has not been the corresponding changes in the political structures. As a result considerable sections of the capitalist class believe that the dictatorship does not take enough account of their interests while it is over-sensitive to the interests of backward sections of the bourgeoisie, landowners the officer caste etc. The "liberal" sectors of the bourgeoisie, generally those most integrated in the international and particularly the EEC markets, want to Europeanize the regime so as to bring it into line with the "democratic strong states" of the common market on the model of Gaullist France. The conflict between the "liberal" and the "conservative" wings of the dictatorship has been given greater urgency by their realisation that Franco, despite being infallible is not immortal and may in fact drop off at any time. The succession problem created by his impending demise is made more acute by the fact that there is no one person and no institution with the authority or power to preserve intact the rule of the dictatorship.

At the base of Francoism's political crisis lies a much deeper problem – the relationship between the ruling classes and the masses. It is necessary for the development and growth of the economy, that certain reforms take place within the Spanish state, so as to make it more flexible and more conducive to foreign capital investment. But the bourgeoisie has no guarantee that the rebellious spirit of the workers and other oppressed sections will lie dormant in the event of a liberalisation of the regime. On the contrary they have every reason to believe that any "opening up" in the regime would result in the mobilisation of the workers against the capitalist system itself. So they find themselves burdened with a dictatorship that most sections of the capitalist class don't really want, but have to accept as a guarantee against social revolution.

The economic crisis

The nineteen sixties witnessed a rise in the standard of living of the Spanish working class and an increase in their confidence in economic struggles. However as elsewhere the deepening recession has made it necessary for the capitalists to retain their profit level, to attack the workers standard of living. So the Spanish working class has been forced to engaged in economic struggle to protect their standard of living, irrespective of the political crisis. Also in Spain, unlike most Western European countries economic struggles lead directly to political struggles. Because independent trade unions are banned, the workers have to organise themselves in illegal movements and if they go on strike they must do so 'illegally'. So automatically the questions of class law and state control are posed, the workers are not just confronting their own bosses but the bourgeois state wth all its apparatus including the secret police and the army. As the economic crisis continues, the conflict between the workers movement and the state will intensify and provide an explosive framework for the developing political crisis of Francoism. The increasing repression in the bourgeois democratic states has the effect of weakening the intervention of outside forces (e.g. Common Market countries and the U.S.A.) for 'reforming' the regime. But it is extremely unlikely that a strengthening of the dictatorships right-wing or an increase in the level of repression will solve the crisis or lessen the combativity of the mass movement.

The mass movement and its political leadership

Through their bitter struggles in the nineteen thirties, the Spanish masses gave an example to the whole world. Their failure then was primarily the result of the suicidal policies followed by their reformist leadership. But instead of learning from the past, the reformists, principally the Communist Party (the Social Democrats virtually disappeared during the years of clandestinity) continue with the line of seeking an alliance betweent the mass movement and "democratic" sections of the bourgeoisie. Realising that sectors of the bourgeosie would only move against the dictatorship if they were certain that there would be no revolutionary challenge to the capitalist system, the Communist Party discourages class struggle and instead recommends "peaceful general strikes". The old stages theory is resurrected. First we fight for democracy and only then do we fight for workers power. This policy has 2 major flaws in practice; The Spanish bourgeosie will only abandon the dictatorship when it is already seen to be on the verge of collapse. In such an event the bourgeoisie would be in a perilous situation and would be quite prepared to ally itself with the C.P. for a period while it regrouped its forces to crush the workers movement. The other flaw in the reformists policy is its supposition that the masses, and particularly the working class would be prepared to limit their demands to 'liberal reforms'. All the evidence suggests that once mobilised the workers won't simply attack the dictatorship but also the capitalist system. This possibility of a revolutionary solution to the crisis of Francoism is strengthened by the emergence of a new layer of advanced workers, that has broken with reformism and is struggling to introduce revolutionary politics into the mass movement. It is in this layer that the Spanish section of the 4th International, the LCR–ETA (V.I.) is based. The L.C.R.-E.T.A. (V.I.) was formed after a fusion between the main Trotskyist current in Spain, the Revolutionary Communist League and one wing of the Basque Nation and Freedom Party the E.T.A. while the main workers organisation, the Workers Commissions, and the Communist Party which dominates it, have put out a call for a peaceful general strike this autumn the L.C.R.-E.T.A. (V.I.) supporting the strike, have called on the militants to prepare for a revolutionary general strike to bring down the dictatorship. It is only by engaging the masses in struggle against the regime that the forces of reaction can be paralysed and any real liberation won.

WOMEN'S ROLE

HOUSEWORK

In this society, woman's 'greatest' role is still defined as that of housewife and mother, in spite of all the liberal rhetoric about womens liberation. Housework is seen as woman's 'vocation' and her education is largely based on psychologically preparing her for this. The media take it for granted that this is her main interest and advertising is geared around the assumption that most women are scared sick of being caught with grey washing, unpolished floors or inedible meals.

This isn't surprising as women are taught to calculate their worth in terms of their ability to cope with this role, rather than their intelligence, strength or creativity. What they are relating to, however isn't something objectively great, it is really boring routine drudgery, self-perpetuating and with no obvious end product or importance in the world. Out of this contradiction comes the vicious circle situation for women: – their role as housewife is unfulfilling, boring and carries little weight – but making a home is their greatest glory, and they are inadequate if they don't want to.

The question arises why? If we don't accept the view that this happens because men are basically ill-intentioned, why is it so essential for society to maintain women in the housewife role. The answer springs from the needs of the capitalist system itself.

At the heart of the capitalist system of production lies the phenomenon of labour power. What this means is a person's ability to work, exactly what the working class, since the industrial revolution, has had to ensure they don't starve. The capitalist buys this through wages. But the price he pays is not its intrinsic worth i.e. the equivalent price of the number of goods or services the labourer produces in the working day, but what it costs to keep that labourer alive and content enough to turn up for work in the morning. Naturally commodities made at this point are vulnerable to the capitalist and increase his profits.

Housework and "Family Life"

Here the family comes in. The housewife in the family daily cares for the needs of both this and the next generation of workers. She sews, cooks, cleans, manages the family money, but the tasks she performs are unpaid. The wages earned by the worker(s) in the family, pay to keep her but do not give her any separate income in relation to the work she does, and yet it would cost an average of £3–£4,000 a year to employ people to carry out the same functions, at current rates. She is reproducing the labour power of the workers in her family for the employer, at no more than a marginal cost to him.

A wage for or end to housework

Some feminists have realised this situation, and have raised the demand 'wages for housework' notably Selma James in England, and it is a temptation at this point to rush in with her solution. This demand seems ideal, it cuts through the capitalists attempt to up profits, it gives women independant financial means and status, it recognises that housework is work and should be recompensed. But however, it is no solution. It still leaves women very much as the servant isolated in the home performing endless menial tasks. Even if employers were prepared to pay wages to housewives, the rates would be low, as it would be almost impossible to organise women working in isolated units and give them any bargaining power. Also the burden of carrying out the tasks involved in reproducing labour power in the home, whether unpaid or paid is still extremely repressive. It means a 12 hour day, or often as long as she is up and awake. This is true in spite of socalled labour saving devices, more connected to the needs of the market than the needs of the housewife.

The demand 'wages for housework' also takes no account of the other role the family plays in capitalist society and its relation to the general oppression of women. The family is the prime educator in bourgeois values, it creates small units isolating woman from woman, worker from worker and it acts as a break on militancy, both industrial and revolutionary. The family burdens all concerned, with individual responsibilities and material reasons for towing the line. There is no point in tackling housework, without viewing the whole reactionary role the family plays in capitalist society.

It is far better to pose the problem of reproduction of labour and the repressive character of housework, in terms of taking the question outside the home. Socialising the domestic functions of the family. Instead of cleaning, washing, cooking being done in each individual unit, it could be done communally by state concerns e.g. state laundries. Housing could be planned so that maintenance etc. could be handled on a larger scale, serviced by people of either sex, paid good rates, thus releasing women from the responsibility.

The only way out of the vicious circle round housework for women, can be by taking the burden off the housewives shoulders, and putting it in the hands of the state and communities concerned.

MAEVE DOLAN

COPING WITH PRICES

Chief among the victims of the current rate of inflation of prices is the housewive. If the worker is being hit by the erosive action of inflation, it is the housewife who is certainly being hammered by an inflation rate which has doubled over the past two years. A closer look at the Consumer Price Index reveals that currently the price increases in food and clothing amount to 40% of the total inflation rate. These are the primary items which the working class housewife forks out for in her role as a cook, administrator, nurse and cleaner in the modern nuclear family unit. The working class movement cannot ignore her position as being peripheral to the "main" class struggle that it is fighting today. To do so would be to ignore an aspect of the crisis which can have far reaching effects.

Causes and effects

Up to May of this year, the price of food has risen by 79% since 1968. Clothing has taken an even higher jump up to an 83% increase. Not being directly involved in the system of production a housewife has no control over spiralling inflation except by way of her husband's pay packet. While in practice this does give her an outlet through pay rises etc. to exract from her husband some of the difference to make up for increases in prices, it still leavers her with no independent means of protection for herself against inflation. Her situation arises from the fact that each family is an atomised unit separated from its counterpart and subject to individual manipulation by the forces of mass advertising. Thus the housewife is separated from her natural ally in the fight against rising prices and forced to make individual cuts in the standard of living of her family. In this situation the family becomes an isolated consumer trap which leaves the housewife an easy prey for reactionary ideology and solutions to the present situation e.g. the incident at Cowley in England where the wives of strikers came out openly for the dismissal of a shopsteward militant.

How to strike a blow

Recent developments both in Ireland and abroad have indicated a slow change in the situation. Examples like Cowley woke up many trade unionists to something which both Womens Liberationists and Marxists have been saying for years i.e. that the lack of organisation of women either in the system of production or in close relation to it, is a very serious weakness in the working class which would become only too apparent in times of crisis. The emergence of consumer co-operatives and consumer protection groups in Ballymun, Dolphin's Barn and Ballyfermot show an increasing awareness especially among housewives of the need to fight price inflation at a local level. These represent a definite step forward, more especially because they serve to break the isolation of working class housewives from each other. No longer isolated consumers they become a force to be reckoned with. In Ballymun the Consumer's Protection Group has campaigned against local supermarkets and is now to open its own co-operative in which will provide a direct market between farmer and consumer. This trend will continue in working class areas as families are increasingly hit by rising prices.

It is important that revolutionaries intervene in this situation with their ideas. Last June in Plough No. 8 we stressed the need to set up genuine Price Control Committees comprising of "trade union representatives, tenant associations, flat dwellers associations, housewives and where practicable, small farmers. The function of these committees would not simply be "to watch prices" but to act to prevent them from rising".
The operation of such committees in themselves cannot put a halt to rising prices. One of the main reasons for such rises is the urge of bosses to maintain and expand profits by pushing up prices thereby eroding the results of workers just wage demands. Thus a vigorous control over profits is needed. But the most efficient means of protecting one's standard of living is by means of a sliding scale of wages whereby within a definite limited period all price rises would be compensated by proportional amounts of wage increases. It is up to militants to intervene in local consumer groups to make sure that not only is the local supermarket challenged but that the whole system of imposing cuts in peoples' standard of living is both understood and opposed.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile the participation of housewives, in protest against rising prices, and their search for solutions such as the women in Ballymun, is a significant development. It is an indication that the time is ripe for a direct liaison of trade unionists and housewives in their fight against inflation and all its results.

RUAIRI MC NEILL

I do not think that there can be any solution which does not include immediate British withdrawal – as immediate as immediate can be. The Irish people must have the right to self-determination, which can only come about through a united Ireland.
–John Lee, M.P.

"We, the undersigned, consider it essential that the Labour Movement takes up the question of the British presence in Ireland. And, in view of the fact that the British presence denies the right of the Irish people as a whole to self-determination, we support the call by the British Peace Committee and the Troops Out Movement for a demonstration calling for the 'immediate implementation of a policy of political and military withdrawal from Ireland' and having the leading slogan 'British Troops Out of Ireland'."
–William Wilson, M.P.; Jeff Rooker, M.P.; Maureen Colquhoun, M.P.; Stan Thorne, M.P.

"We should immediately set a date for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. This would create a new political dimension in Ireland. We must also withdraw politically and economically from what is our oldest colony."
–Joan Maynard

"The Tories and their friends tell us that if the British troops are withdrawn there will be a massacre. What do these people call what's going on now?

The British Army is in Ireland to support a desperate attempt by a Unionist clique to hold onto power, against the wishes of the great majority of the Irish people.
What we need is a massive campaign to demand that the troops get out
–Alderman L.P. O'Connor (Labour Party Deputy Chief Whip on the Greater London Council)

TROOPS OUT SUPPORT GROWS

The Scottish revolutionary socialist, John MacClean, referred, in the title of a pamphlet, to Britain's role in Ireland as 'Irelands Tragedy, Scotland's Disgrace'. It is also the disgrace of the entire British Labour Movement.

Lenin was appalled, in 1921, at the backwardness of the British Labour Party on the question. But the recent record of the Labour Party is the worst in its sorry history, including as it does the putting in of troops in 1969, full support for the murderous course of government policy under the Tories, the continuation and stepping up of the policy of repression and internment the supervision of the death of Michael Gaughan, and the bowing to Loyalist reaction.

However, within the broad Labour Movement, strong currents of opposition to Britain's imperialist policy are beginning to stir. At the May conference of the Troops Out Movement, it was evident that important sectors of the working class were beginning to take up a position in support of Irish self-determination, where before such a position had been largely restricted to the extreme Left and students. Since then Ireland has been raised more and more widely within the working class.

In its work this year, the Troops Out Movement has received the support of 14 Trade Councils, 74 trade union branches, and innumerable tenants associations, student unions and socialist organisations. Some Trades Councils have taken independent initiatives, such as the South Shields Anti-Recruitment Campaign. Increasingly, meetings on the demands of immediate withdrawal of the Army and self-determination for the whole of the Irish people have drawn in speakers and audiences from the trade union movement.

In addition to the work of the Troops Out Movement, the British Peace Committee, and the Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign, independent actions of the revolutionary Left are forcing the question of Ireland to the attention of the British working class and confronting the Labour Party with its role in government. Throughout the recent election campaign, members of the International Marxist Group denounced Labour policy on Ireland and forced Labour candidates to speak on the subject that they were most eager to avoid. Enoch Powell too, was harrassed and hounded by interventions from the IMG at meetings in Britain; in one case he was prevented from speaking at all.

The New Year will see a major crisis of British strategy in the North. The British government is committed on the one hand to some form of power-sharing, and on the other hand to holding elections to a Constitutional Convention, which will return a majority of Loyalist, anti-power-sharing members. Caught in this contradiction the strength of 'Troops Out' support within the Labour Movement will be a crucial factor in determining the moves of the British government.

With 60% of the British population favouring troop withdrawal (Daily Mail Opinion Poll), and with army morale at an alltime low, a real possibility exists of bringing about a break in the bi-partisan policy in Westminster.

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